



Child Care Licensing Bureau
www.michigan.gov/michildcare
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Issue 114
Maintenance of Premises

Michigan Child Care Matters

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Maintenance of Premises edition of the Michigan Child Care Matters (MCCM) newsletter. This MCCM edition includes articles about maintaining the premises of your facility and covers a range of topics from fire prevention, outdoor maintenance, risk of lead exposure, sanitizing safely, and more. Some of the articles are targeted for centers, some for homes and some for both centers and homes. The Editorial Staff of MCCM hope this newsletter is a helpful resource for you in keeping your home and center as safe as it can be for the children in your care. If you have questions about any of the rules or topics covered in this newsletter, please reach out to your licensing consultant for guidance.

Licensing has developed tests based on the content of this newsletter. You can receive up to one clock hour of annual training for reading three newsletters and passing the associated tests each calendar year. Each article will include a symbol in the title of the article to identify the content as appropriate for center child care providers, home child care providers or all child care providers. For more information on how to access these tests, go to www.michigan.gov/mccmatters.



Article is appropriate for **ALL** child care providers.



Article is appropriate for **CENTER** child care providers.



Article is appropriate for **HOME** child care providers.

Environmental Health.

Jackie Sharkey, Area Manager
Pontiac Region



The environmental health of your center or home is a very important part of your child care program. Keeping it clean and in good repair helps the children in your care stay safe and healthy.

The following list will help remind you of what is needed to keep your facility in safe condition:

Centers

Environmental Health Inspection

An inspection must be conducted by the local health department, and an approval granted at the following times:

- ⇒ Every 2 years, at the time of renewal, if the center has a private well or septic.
- ⇒ Every 2 years, at the time of renewal, if you have food service in which food is **prepared and served onsite, unless the kitchen is currently licensed to provide food service** (please see the technical assistance and consultation manual for child care centers for further information about what this means and if your food service requires an environmental health inspection).
- ⇒ Prior to adding a food service program.
- ⇒ Prior to adding an infant and toddler program.
- ⇒ When requested by the department.

Smoking and vaping:

- ⇒ Ensure that no smoking or vaping occur in the center or on any part of the property under the control of the center and upon which the center is located.
- ⇒ On field trips and in vehicles when children are present.

Equipment and materials:

Make sure of the following:

- ⇒ Non-absorbent diaper changing surface is in good repair.
- ⇒ All play equipment and materials are kept clean, free of hazards and are in good repair. Staff are trained to clean toys and other play equipment soiled by secretion or excretion with soap and water, rinsed and sanitized before being used by a child.
- ⇒ Equipment, materials, and furnishings recalled or identified by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission as being hazardous are not used or are removed from the center.
- ⇒ All bedding is in good repair.
- ⇒ No heavy objects that could fall on a child, such as shelving and televisions, are above sleeping equipment.

- ⇒ Materials that have a warning label indicating they are toxic for children, or to keep out of reach of children, are not used by children.
- ⇒ Children are protected from materials that could be swallowed and/or present a choking hazard.
- ⇒ All dangerous and hazardous materials or items are stored securely and out of the reach of children.

For centers that provide food service:

Check for the following:

- ⇒ Food prep areas are smooth with no cracks, chips, or corrosion, and are nonabsorbent. Surfaces with any issues must be repaired. Duct or other tape and contact paper are not acceptable.
- ⇒ There are no live animals in the food prep area.
- ⇒ When the only food prep that is occurring is for infants/toddlers, there is a sink that is used exclusively for prep and clean up. Hand washing after diapering or toileting must not occur in this sink.
- ⇒ All refrigerators in the center have an accurate working thermometer in each with a reading of 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below.
- ⇒ Artificial lighting fixtures located over, by or within food storage, prep/service areas or where utensils and equipment are cleaned and stored, are properly shielded. Check your refrigerators to make sure the lightbulbs are shielded, are made of rubberized material or are shatter-proof. Check lightbulbs within pantries or other food storage locations, food prep and service areas, or where utensils and equipment are cleaned and stored. They must be shielded.
- ⇒ Poisonous or toxic materials are not stored with food, food service equipment, utensils, or single-service articles. This includes snacks stored in cupboards within classrooms.
- ⇒ Food, food service equipment and utensils are not located under exposed or unprotected sewer lines, open stairwells, or other sources of contamination (automatic fire protection sprinkler heads are the exception).
- ⇒ Food, food service equipment, or utensils are not stored in toilet rooms.
- ⇒ All tableware, utensils, food contact surfaces, and food service equipment are thoroughly washed, rinsed, and sanitized after each use. All staff are trained to thoroughly wash, rinse, and sanitize before and after they are used for meals and snacks.



Water supply; plumbing; toilets; hand washing sinks:

Make sure of the following:

- ⇒ Sinks, toilets, drinking fountains, and other water outlets are supplied with safe water, with enough pressure and quantity to meet conditions of peak demand. If the color or odor of the water does not seem right, or the quantity or pressure is low in the sinks or drinking fountains, the water is checked or the pressure/flow adjusted.
- ⇒ Hand washing sinks and faucets have water that does not exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ⇒ All plumbing fixtures and water and waste pipes are maintained in good working condition. Check for leaks or other issues that need to be corrected.
- ⇒ Water heater is in good working condition. All fuel-fired water heaters are inspected by a licensed mechanical contractor or a licensed plumbing contractor every 2 years at renewal.

Garbage:

Check for the following:

- ⇒ A plastic-lined, tightly covered container is used exclusively for disposable diapers and training pants and diaper supplies. The container is emptied and sanitized at the end of each day.
- ⇒ All garbage is removed from the center daily.
- ⇒ Garbage containers are washed when soiled.
- ⇒ Garbage stored outside is in sealed plastic bags in watertight containers with tight-fitting covers or in a covered dumpster.
- ⇒ Outside garbage and refuse is picked up or removed at a minimum of once a week.

Temperature of center:

- ⇒ Indoor temperature is at least 65 degrees Fahrenheit in child use areas at a point 2 feet above the floor. If the temperatures fall below this, you must turn up the thermostat or call for service, if needed.
- ⇒ If the temperature of the center exceeds 82 degrees Fahrenheit, then measures must be taken to cool the children. This may be with air conditioning, fans inaccessible to the children, or open windows with screens in good repair.

Fire safety and exiting:

- ⇒ Fuel-fired furnace is inspected by a licensed mechanical contractor every 2 years at renewal.
- ⇒ Fuel-fired hot water heater is inspected by a licensed mechanical contractor or a licensed plumbing contractor every 2 years at renewal.



⇒ If a boiler is used, an inspection and a certificate from the boiler division provided to the department as required by the boiler division.

⇒ Means of egress are maintained in an unobstructed, easily traveled condition at all times that the center is in operation. There should not be anything blocking the exits at any time.

⇒ Heating plant rooms must be closed at all times.

⇒ Flammable materials, including fuels, pressurized cans, cleaning fluids and supplies, polishes, and matches, are not stored in heat plant closures. These items are stored outside of child use areas in metal cabinets or storage facilities, accessible only to authorized personnel.

⇒ Combustible materials are not stored within the heat plant room or fuel-fired water-heater room or in basements containing fuel-fired heating equipment without proper fire

separation.

- ⇒ Fire extinguishers are properly mounted, inspected, and maintained. The fire extinguisher must bear a tag indicating the last date of inspection or service and the initials of the person who performed the inspection or service.

Premises:

Make sure of the following:

- ⇒ The premises are maintained in a clean and safe condition, do not pose a threat to health or safety, and are maintained to eliminate and prevent rodent and insect harborage. There should be no gaps around the outside doors; no holes in window or door screens.
- ⇒ Stairs, walkways, ramps, landings, and porches meet all the following:
 - ◇ If elevated, have barriers to prevent falls and handrails designed and constructed for use by children. Make sure the barriers and handrails are in good and safe condition.
 - ◇ Maintained in safe condition relative to the accumulation of water, ice, or snow and shall have nonslip surfacing. All stairs, walkways, ramps, landings, and porches must be cleared of standing water, ice, or snow during hours of operation.
- ⇒ All cords (drapes, blinds, appliance) are out of reach of children.
- ⇒ Electrical outlets in child use areas for children under school-age are inaccessible.
- ⇒ Hazardous items are inaccessible to children such as sharp objects, cleaning-supplies, plastic bags, garbage. These need to be removed or placed in an area inaccessible to children. If children would have access to any of these items, they need to be made inaccessible, even if children are taught not to touch them.

Roof, Walls, Doors, Windows, etc.

Make sure of the following:

- ⇒ Roofs, exterior walls, doors, skylights, and windows are weathertight and watertight and are kept in sound condition and good repair. Repair any leaks, holes or gaps.
- ⇒ Floors, interior walls, and ceilings are kept in sound condition and good repair and are maintained in clean condition.
 - ___ The floors do not have any tripping hazards and are clean.
 - ___ They are safe for walking, crawling, and playing.
 - ___ Rooms are free from unnecessary clutter.
 - ___ Surfaces are without cracks, tears, gouges, peeling paint, etc.
 - ___ Ceilings do not have missing panels or tiles.
 - ___ Ceiling tiles are replaced if showing signs of water damage.
- ⇒ No flaking or deteriorating paint on interior and exterior surfaces or on equipment accessible to children. If the paint is peeling, chipped, chalking or cracked, it must be repaired.
- ⇒ All toilet room floor surfaces are easily cleanable and are constructed and maintained to be impervious to water. Cracked or porous floors must be repaired.
- ⇒ Light fixtures, vent covers, wall-mounted fans, and similar equipment attached to walls and ceilings are easily cleanable and maintained in good repair. Be sure dust and dirt are removed.
- ⇒ Windows and doors used for ventilation are supplied with screening of not less than 16 mesh and must be in good repair.



Outdoor play area.

- ⇒ Outside grounds are free of debris, animal waste, standing water, and tripping hazards. Caregivers must check this daily before going outside.
- ⇒ The outdoor play area has a shaded area to protect children from excessive sun exposure, when necessary.
- ⇒ The depth of loose-fill surface material is restored to its required depth when it has moved or becomes otherwise compromised.
- ⇒ Play equipment is maintained in a safe condition.

Homes



Environmental Health Inspection

An inspection must be conducted by the local health department, and an approval granted for the following:

- ⇒ Private water supplies. The health inspection must be completed at original Licensure. The health department findings and recommendations are considered when determining compliance.

Smoking and vaping:

- ⇒ Ensure that smoking and vaping do not occur in child-use space, on the premises of a child care home while children are in care, and in a vehicle when used to transport children who are in care. This includes in a garage, backyard or in a vehicle on the property. Notify parents if smoking or vaping occurs in the home when children are not in care.

“All dangerous and hazardous materials or items are stored securely and out of the reach of children.”

Equipment and materials:

Check for the following:

- ⇒ All play equipment and materials are kept clean, free of hazards and in good repair.
- ⇒ Toys and other play equipment soiled by secretion or excretion are cleaned with soap and water, rinsed and sanitized before being used by a child.
- ⇒ All bedding and sleeping equipment are cleaned when soiled and before being used by another and washed weekly at a minimum.
- ⇒ Equipment, materials, and furnishings recalled or identified by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission as being hazardous are not used.
- ⇒ All cribs, play yards, and porta-cribs are equipped with a firm, tight-fitting mattress with a waterproof washable covering, as recommended and approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- ⇒ Play yard mattresses are purchased from the manufacturer of the play yard and be manufactured after February 19, 2014 and meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission safety standards for play.
- ⇒ All children are protected from materials that could be swallowed or present a choking hazard. Toys or objects with removable parts less than 1 ¼ inches in diameter and less than 2 ¼ inches in length, as well as balls smaller than 1 ¾ inches in diameter are prohibited for children under 3 years of age.
- ⇒ All dangerous and hazardous materials or items are stored securely and out of the reach of children.

Outdoor play area:

- ⇒ The outdoor area is clean, safe, and hazard free.
- ⇒ There are safe distances between equipment.
- ⇒ Outdoor play equipment is safe and in good repair.
- ⇒ Outdoor play equipment with a designated play surface above 30 inches (swings, climbers, slides, etc.) are not placed over concrete, asphalt, hard-packed dirt or grass.

Water hazards; water activities:

- ⇒ Barriers are 4 feet in height and appropriately secured to prevent children from gaining access to water hazards.
- ⇒ A hot tub or spa pool is inaccessible to children in care by the use of a locked hard cover.

Garbage:

- ⇒ Diapers and diaper supplies are emptied and sanitized at the end of each day.
- ⇒ Potty chairs are emptied, rinsed, and sanitized after each use.

Premises:

Make sure of the following:

- ⇒ The structure, premises, and furnishings are in good repair and maintained in a clean, safe, and comfortable condition.
- ⇒ All dangerous and hazardous materials or items are stored securely and out of the reach of children.
- ⇒ All steps, stairs, porches, and elevated structures to which children in care have access are protected to prevent falls and are free of ice and snow accumulation.
- ⇒ Three or more steps, or a total rise of 24 inches or more, have a handrail. All handrails are in good and safe condition.
- ⇒ Parents are notified before pesticide or fertilizer treatments.
- ⇒ There is no flaking or deteriorating paint on interior and exterior surfaces, equipment, and toys accessible to children.
- ⇒ The home has at least one operable flush toilet and one handwashing sink with hot and cold running water.
- ⇒ The hot water temperature does not exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit at water faucets accessible to children. An anti-scald device may be used on faucets used by staff and children.
- ⇒ Each room used by children has adequate ventilation and is maintained at a safe and comfortable temperature.
 - _____the temperature is not less than 65 degrees Fahrenheit at a point 2 feet above the floor.
 - _____measures are taken to cool children when the temperature exceeds 82 degrees Fahrenheit.

“The environmental health of your center or home is a very important part of your child care program. Keeping it clean and in good repair helps the children in your care stay safe and healthy.”



“Litter boxes, pet food, pet dishes, and pet toys are inaccessible to children.”



- ⇒ Windows and doors used for ventilation are screened and in good repair.
- ⇒ Carbon monoxide detectors are placed on all levels approved for child care.
- ⇒ The child care home is tested for the concentration of levels of radon gases in the lowest level of the home. The radon gases do not exceed 4 picocuries per liter. The test shall be completed before the license is issued and every 4 years at the time of license renewal.
- ⇒ Operable smoke detectors are maintained on each floor of the home, including the basement, and in all sleeping areas and bedrooms used by children in care.
- ⇒ There is at least 1 functioning multipurpose fire extinguisher, with a 2A-10BC or larger rating, properly mounted not higher than 5 feet from the top of the fire extinguisher, on each floor level approved for child care.
- ⇒ A radon test has been completed in the lowest level of the home every 4 years at the time of renewal.
- ⇒ There is adequate natural or artificial lighting.
- ⇒ Combustible materials and equipment are not stored within 4 feet of furnaces, other flame or heat producing equipment or fuel-fired water heaters.
- ⇒ Portable heating devices are not used when children are in care.
- ⇒ All flame-producing and heat-producing equipment are maintained in safe condition and shielded to protect against burns. These include, but are not limited to:
 - ◇ Furnace
 - ◇ Water heater
 - ◇ Fireplace
 - ◇ Radiator and pipes
 - ◇ Wood burning equipment
 - ◇ Contact your consultant with questions about any other heat-producing equipment.
- ⇒ The flame-producing and heat producing equipment has been expected every 4 years at the time of renewal.
- ⇒ Litter boxes, pet food, pet dishes, and pet toys are inaccessible to children.

Electrical Safety:

- ⇒ All electrical outlets, including outlets on multiple outlet devices, are not accessible to children and have safety covers.
- ⇒ Electrical cords are arranged so they are not hazardous to children.

Exiting:

Check for the following:

- ⇒ At least 1 exit from each floor level is direct, safe, and unobstructed at street or ground level.
- ⇒ All exits are unobstructed and accessible at all times.
- ⇒ A window exit is accessible, clearly identified, can be readily opened.
- ⇒ Means of egress are adequately lit at all times children are in care.

- ⇒ Doors located in a required path of escape are readily openable from the side of egress without the use of a key or special knowledge. The door is openable with one motion.
- ⇒ Interior door hardware is designed to allow opening from the outside during an emergency if locked.
- ⇒ All closet door latches are such that children can open the door from inside the closet.

Temperature:

Check for the following:

- ⇒ Each room used by children has adequate ventilation and is maintained at a safe and comfortable temperature so that children do not become overheated, chilled, or cold. The temperature cannot be less than 65 degrees Fahrenheit at 2 feet above the floor, and measures must be taken to cool the children when the temperature exceeds 82 degrees.
- ⇒ Windows used for ventilation are screened and in good repair.
- ⇒ All child use areas have adequate natural and/or artificial lighting.



Firearms:

- ⇒ All firearms in the home are unloaded and properly stored in a secure, safe, locked environment, inaccessible to children. A secure locked environment must include a commercially available locking firearms cabinet, gun safe, trigger lock that prevents discharge, or other locking firearm device.
- ⇒ Ammunition is stored in a separate locked location inaccessible to children.

When to close your child care

Questions to ask to determine whether the child care should close in an emergency situation, such as a power outage:

- How long is the situation expected to last? For example, how long will the power or water be off?
- Are there any working telephones?
- If food or bottles in the child care need to be refrigerated, is the temperature of the refrigerator 41 degrees Fahrenheit or lower.
- Are the sinks working? Are the children/staff able to wash hands under warm running water?
- Can the toilets be flushed?
- Is the temperature of the facility 65 degrees Fahrenheit or above 2 feet above the floor?
- Are you able to take measures to cool the temperature of the facility if it is above 82 degrees Fahrenheit?
- Is there enough lighting to provide for appropriate supervision of the children?

If the answer is “no” to at least one of the questions, you may need to close your child care until the situation has resolved. Please contact your licensing consultant.

The Risk of Lead Exposure in Your Child Care

Catherine Edgar, Licensing Consultant
Flint Region

In the past few years, you have undoubtedly heard much in the news about the negative effects of lead exposure, especially in young children. Most of the recent information has focused on lead in our water supply but exposure to lead can come from countless other sources, with the most common being paint. If your child care home or center was built prior to 1978, then there is a good chance that lead-based paint was used on both the interior and exterior. Lead was added to paint to increase durability and to resist moisture damage and was not banned in the United States until 1978. Homes and centers built prior to 1950 have a potential for higher lead risk as paint produced prior to 1950 had a much higher lead content.

Lead is particularly harmful to children under age 6 and pregnant women. Young children's brains are much more sensitive to the effects of lead. Young children often put objects in their mouths. This can be dangerous if these objects contain paint chips or lead dust. Lead exposure affects the brain and other vital organs, and can cause behavioral problems, learning disabilities, seizures, and even death. Young children and pregnant women are at higher risk, but people (and animals) of any age can experience lead-caused health problems.

Lead paint usually does not pose a problem unless it is peeling, cracking, becomes damp, or is located on a surface that children may chew on, such as window sills. Areas of the home that get a lot of traffic such as doors or railings tend to have paint that is worn down. This can produce chipping paint and lead paint dust. Renovation also disturbs the lead paint and produces much lead dust that then can be found on all surfaces in the home, including carpet/floors, toys, food contact surfaces and even food. Any renovation to a home or center built prior to 1978 must be done following the Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) rule, which establishes requirements for firms and individuals performing renovations, and affects contractors, property managers, and others who disturb painted surfaces. It applies to work on houses, apartments, and child-occupied facilities (such as schools and child care centers) built before 1978. It includes pre-renovation education requirements as well as training, firm certification, and work practice requirements. Renovations that can disturb lead paint include the following:

- Remodeling and repair/maintenance
- Electrical work
- Plumbing
- Painting preparation
- Carpentry
- Window replacement

Child care centers built prior to 1978 are required to have a lead hazard risk assessment conducted by a certified lead risk assessor. If a child care home was built prior to 1978, the licensee must inform all parents and assistant caregivers of the potential presence of lead-based paint and lead dust hazards unless the licensee has documentation from a lead testing professional that the home is lead safe. Child care homes licensees must also inform parents and assistant caregivers in writing, prior to any activities that could disturb the lead-based paint.

Lead exposure can also occur outside of the home or center due to lead-based paint used on building exteriors and from vehicle emissions. Lead was not removed from all gasoline until 1995 and it continues to remain in the soil, especially near high-traffic areas near main roads and highways. A lead hazard risk inspection required on child care centers built prior to 1978 must include an inspection of the outdoor play area as well. Any outdoor play area that borders a home built prior to 1978 must not consist of uncovered soil. This outdoor surface must be grass, mulch, or a similar ground covering. Because lead remains in the soil, it is recommended that shoes be removed when coming indoors to avoid tracking in lead-contaminated soil. This is especially important in areas used by infants and toddlers. It is also recommended that children in care in homes built prior to 1978 nap on elevated surfaces such as cots due to potential exposure to lead dust that tends to accumulate on floors, especially in carpet.

There are many things you can do to lessen the possibility of lead exposure to the children in your care. In addition to those discussed in the article, you can contact www.michigan.gov/leadsafe and the Healthy Homes Section of this website or call (866) 691-5323. Certified lead risk assessors can be found [at this link](#) or at www.epa.gov. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also has resources regarding doing renovations on your home or center. These can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/lead/renovation-repair-and-painting-program-operators-child-care-facilities>. Because there is no safe level of exposure to lead, we must be diligent in ensuring that any and all steps are taken to keep lead exposure from the children in care.

Still have questions?

If you still have questions,
please contact your licensing
consultant.



Fire Prevention

Erika Bigelow, Division Director

Fire safety and fire prevention are critical for child care facilities. Practicing both may help save the lives of the children and caregivers at the facility. There are steps that you can take to make your facility safe.

Center facilities need to make sure there are no combustibles in the heat plant room or near furnaces and gas-fired heaters. Home facilities need to make sure that combustibles are not stored within four feet of furnaces, or other flame or heat-producing equipment or fuel-fired water heaters. Combustible means that the material will ignite and burn when subjected to fire or excessive heat. Examples of combustible materials include papers, cardboard, wood items, clothing, and plastics.

Portable heaters/space heaters cannot be used when children are in care. Portable heaters are a common cause of burns, fires and injuries. A portable heating device is one that can be moved from wall to wall or room to room.

Fire extinguishers must be rated 2A-10BC or higher and must be properly mounted and maintained. Mounting the fire extinguishers better guarantees that they will remain in their designated location, so if needed, they can be found. Keeping fire extinguishers

properly maintained will increase the ability for them to work, if needed.

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Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are important for notifying everyone of immediate danger. It is important to routinely check the smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors to make sure they are working properly. Additionally, check the battery to make sure there is no corrosion or other issues.

Outdoor Maintenance
Candice Case-French, Area Manager
Northwest Region



Providers often think of outlet covers, safety latches on cupboards, and smoke detectors when thinking about routine maintenance checks in the home or center. However, it is just as important to make sure providers are completing routine maintenance checks on the outside of the home or center. Many outdoor accidents can be prevented by completing a thorough inspection of the premises every day.

Playground Maintenance

Providers should complete a daily playground check before children use the approved outdoor play area. When completing the playground check, be sure to inspect the ground covering under any elevated equipment to make sure it is adequate and that the play area is free of hazards. Also check the equipment and toys for any loose or broken parts. Remove or restrict the use of anything that needs to be repaired.

Ground coverings need to be adequate and safe. Oftentimes the woodchips or sand under swing sets and other elevated equipment get kicked out of place by children as they play. Be sure to have a rake or shovel handy to help spread the ground covering when necessary. A rake can help break up hard packed sand after a heavy rainfall. Children spend a large amount of time on the playground, a daily walk through can prevent many playground accidents.

Exterior Building and Fencing Maintenance

When completing a routine maintenance check outside, be sure to look for chipping paint, peeling varnish, or rusted metal on decks, fences, the sides of buildings, playground equipment and other outside structures. Check fencing for holes, loose boards, protruding nails, broken latches, and other damage. Also be on the lookout for warped or rough wood that could potentially cause slivers or be a tripping hazard. Michigan's extreme winters can be hard on outside structures. It is especially important to do a thorough inspection in the spring after the snow has melted.

Water Hazards

If water hazards are present on the property or nearby, it is important to be aware of the potential risks and to take quick action to remedy any issues. Be sure that rescue equipment is accessible and in good working condition if there is a lake, river, or pool present. Check the fencing and locks to make sure children cannot access the water and make sure all caregivers know the emergency procedures for water emergencies.

Oftentimes water hazards are present for only part of the year. Wetlands and standing water from thawing snow can be a hazard. Standing water can also be found in buckets, in sandboxes, and other areas. Children can drown in just a couple inches of water. It also attracts insects and is the perfect breeding ground for bacteria. Take measures to identify and protect children from potential water hazards.

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Potential Hazards

Additional hazards may not be as obvious. Cigarette butts, broken glass, animal feces, and garbage can all be potential hazards. It is especially important to check the outdoor areas on Monday and in the mornings when outsiders may have had access to your outdoor areas. Remind staff and family members to pick up items such as tools, food wrappers, cleaning supplies, and gas cans. Caregivers are responsible for ensuring that the outdoor play area is safe at all times.

Cold Weather Hazards

Winter brings its own unique challenges. During the winter months, it is especially important to stay on top of your outdoor maintenance. Providers should regularly check the walkways and emergency exits for snow and ice; this includes emergency window exits in homes. In addition, any icicles or buildup of snow on the roof should be removed from all doorways and

Warm Weather Hazards

During the warm months, children spend a lot more time outside. Check the premises for swarms of hornets, wasps, mosquitoes, and biting ants that could potentially injure a child. Look for tripping hazards such as garden hoses and tent stakes. Check the surface temperature of playground equipment to prevent burns and check to make sure there is adequate shade. Fire pits and gas grills should be covered and inaccessible to children in care. A few minutes a day completing an outdoor maintenance check can cut down on summertime injuries or incidents.

Daily Maintenance Checks

One easy way to stay on top of outdoor maintenance is to create a checklist of potential hazards. Assign a caregiver the task of checking off each item as he/she walks through the outdoor areas every morning. Create a shorter checklist for each caregiver to use before each outdoor play time. Have the caregivers document the hazards found and fix the easy hazards such as removing garbage from the outdoor play area. For hazards that can't be instantly fixed, such as a deck that needs to be repainted, keep a list of the big hazards that need to be addressed and set dates for fixing the hazards. By looking for potential outdoor hazards and staying on top of routine maintenance, many injuries and incidents that happen outside can be prevented.



Integrated Pest Management
Thanh Biehl, Child Care Consultant
Livingston County

It is important to protect children and caregivers from pesticides used to manage pests. Pests may impact the health of children in a variety of ways such as causing skin reactions, asthma or producing allergic reactions. Pests can affect children who are more prone to diseases and illnesses caused by insects than adults.

A pesticide is any substance used to kill, repel, or control certain forms of plant or animal life that are considered to be pests. All pesticides have some level of toxicity and pose some risk to infants and children. The risk depends on the toxicity of the pesticide ingredients and how much of the pesticide a child is exposed to.

Infants and children are more sensitive to the toxic effects of pesticides than adults. Various factors can increase the risk of pesticide exposures among children. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An infant's brain, nervous system, and organs are still developing after birth.
- When exposed, a baby's immature liver and kidneys cannot remove pesticides from the body as well as an adult's liver and kidneys.
- Infants may also be exposed to more pesticide than adults because they take more breaths per minute and have more skin surface relative to their body weight.
- Children often spend more time closer to the ground, touching baseboards and lawns where pesticides may have been applied.
- Babies that crawl on treated carpeting may have a greater potential to dislodge pesticide residue onto their skin or breathe in pesticide-laden dust. Young children are also more likely to put their fingers, toys, and other objects into their mouths.

(National Pesticide Information Center)

Children's safety from pests and pesticides is a primary concern. It is important to minimize the children's exposure to pesticides. One way to minimize exposure is to take an approach called Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Child care centers must develop and implement an IPM plan when pesticide applications occur on the premises. IPM is a strategy of managing pests using a variety of non-chemical or pesticide applications to prevent and remove pests.

The IPM must include an annual notification provided to parents or guardians informing them that they will receive advance notice of pesticide applications. The notice must contain information about the pesticide, including the target pest or purpose, approximate location, date of the application, contact information at the center, and a toll-free number for a national pesticide information center recognized by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Child care centers should make every effort to inform parents, guardians, and staff of the use of pesticides. The annual notice must be given in September of each year, and at least 48 hours is required prior to the application of pesticides.

The annual notice must state the two methods of advance notice of application of pesticides. One method of notice must be by posting a notice at the entrance doors. A second notification can be made by:

- Posting in a public, common area, at a conspicuous location at the point of entry to the child care center.
- Email.
- A telephone call (must make direct contact with a parent or guardian).
- Providing students with a written notice to be delivered to the parent or guardian.
- Posting on the school's or child care center's website.

Liquid spray or aerosol insecticide applications may not be applied in a room of a center unless the room will be unoccupied by children for not less than four hours or longer as stated on the product label. Toys and other items mouthed by children must be removed prior to spraying.

The IPM notification and requirements do not apply to the following:

- Common products such as germicides, disinfectants, sanitizers, and antimicrobials.
- Bait pesticide formulation.
- Gel pesticide formulation.

IPM controls pests while reducing the hazards of pests and pesticide exposure. An IPM is required for all child care centers when pesticide applications occur on the premises. However, it is recommended that centers develop an IPM even when not planning on applying pesticides. The development of a plan allows centers to be prepared if the need to apply pesticides arises.

Model plans can be found at:

- Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development website at www.michigan.gov/mdard (Consumer Information > Pest Control).
 - Child care licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare (Licensed Providers > Resources).
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Safer Cleaning and Sanitizing
Cynthia Jalynski, Licensing Consultant
Oakland County

Cleaning and sanitizing the child care environment is necessary for good infection control. Using safe practices can go a long way toward lowering risks related to chemical and toxin exposure. Some health risks of exposure are immediate, such as accidental ingestion of poisonous or toxic substances or when a substance sprayed in a room triggers an asthma attack. Many health effects of chemical contact are unknown.

The first method for eliminating dangerous chemical contact is easy but often unfollowed. Containers with poisonous or toxic substances must be clearly labeled and kept out of children's reach.

It's common for consultants to find bleach and cleaning supplies stored in cabinets under sinks or other areas accessible to children.

A bleach and water solution is the most commonly used sanitizing product in child care settings, but it's not the only option. Using a commercial or residential dishwasher that reaches a minimum temperature of 170 degrees Fahrenheit is an acceptable alternative to bleach or other sanitizing chemicals. Most residential units that reach this temperature refer to it as a sanitizing cycle. This method is effective for food utensils, toys, and other items children may place in their mouths, provided they are dishwasher safe.

Submerging items in a solution containing between 50 to 100 parts per million (ppm) of chlorine for at least one minute at a temperature of at least 75 degrees is another method described in the licensing rules for centers.

Whenever a chemical, such as bleach or chlorine is used as a sanitizing agent, a test kit is needed to measure the concentration. These kits, or test strips, can be purchased at most food service stores and online. A quaternary ammonium compound, or quat, is a commonly used alternative to bleach. There are specific kits designed to measure this chemical's strength.

Anytime a provider uses something other than the typically used bleach solution, it is best to check with a sanitarian at the county health division or other credible health agency to ensure the product is both potent enough to provide good infection control and safe to use for the intended purpose.

All quat compounds are not the same. It's important to read the label and to follow the manufacturer's instructions specific to that product. For example, child care staff sometimes use quat solutions or other cleaning products on soft items such as soft diaper changing mats when the instructions specifically indicate "For use on hard, nonporous surfaces."

Quat solutions are also sometimes improperly used on food contact surfaces and items children place in their mouths. While some manufacturers indicate the quat products may be appropriate for these purposes, the use may require a different concentration or a final rinse. All toys, pacifiers, or other items placed in a child's mouth should be thoroughly rinsed after being sanitized with bleach or quat solution, then air dried.

There is growing interest in "green" products believed to be safer for the environment and people. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides many online resources for selecting and properly using these products. The agency cautions that product labels can be deceiving. Labels containing words like green, natural, and nontoxic are not regulated by the government. The products labeled in this way may not be a safer alternative to bleach or less toxic. The EPA makes it easier for people to make good choices with their Safer Choice online product lists. Again, a product is only safe, or relatively safe, when properly used for its intended purpose. It is the provider's responsibility to be certain the selected product is safe and suitable and to seek professional input when this is unclear.

When thinking about safely cleaning and sanitizing the child care environment, diaper mats, food contact surfaces, and toys come to mind. It's also important to consider what kinds of products are being used on other materials children routinely touch, including carpeting, flooring, and toilet seats. Chemicals are absorbed through the skin. Children's skin is much thinner than adults and they spend a lot more time on the floor. Providers also need to consider the safety of the products used on these surfaces and to know what chemicals are being used since they are sometimes applied by maintenance staff unaffiliated with the child care center.

Below are some additional tips for improving safety related to cleaning chemicals in the classroom. Much of the content was adapted from The EPA and partnering University of California Berkeley Center for Environmental Research and Children's Health. Visit their website for more information on promoting safe child care environments.

www.epa.gov/childcare/safe-and-healthy-child-care-centers

www.epa.gov/saferchoice

Tips for safer cleaning and sanitizing:

- Disinfectants are more toxic than sanitizers and are often unsuitable for food contact surfaces or items children place in their mouths.

- Always use test strips to confirm the proper concentration of bleach and quat.

- Mix sanitizers in a well-ventilated area.

- Do not mix bleach with anything other than water.

- Avoid spraying sanitizers when children are nearby.

- Allow sprayed surfaces to completely dry before children have access to them.

- Label poisonous or toxic chemicals and store them out of reach.

- Have parents supply cups, water bottles and tableware for their child's individual use. Staff can rinse and send the items home versus sanitizing them at the center.

- When properly sanitizing dishware and utensils is not possible, using single-service cups, plates, and utensils is an option.

**MICHIGAN CHILD
CARE MATTERS**

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Information to Know

Child care licensing bureau: www.michigan.gov/cclb or
www.michigan.gov/michildcare

Child Care Background Check Unit: 844-765-2247

Child Development and Care: www.michigan.gov/childcare

Complaint hotline: 866-856-0126

Consumer Product Safety Commission Infant/Child Product Recalls (not including toys)

- A link to recalls specific to child care licensing will be available under the Michigan Child Care Matters website at www.michigan.gov/mccmatters.
- Details on these product recalls may be obtained on the CPSC's website (www.cpsc.gov). Post this page in your facility to be in compliance with the Children's Product Safety Act (2000 PA 219).

Online Applications for Child Care Licensing

To complete an online application, go to www.michigan.gov/adultchildcareapply. For questions related to child care licensing, contact your licensing consultant or 866-685-0006.

For online applications, you must create a MiLogin account. For help with MiLogin contact the MiLogin Customer Service Center at 1-877-932-6424.

To complete an online application, only up-to-date browsers are compatible. Such browsers are Internet Explorer, FireFox, and Chrome. If you are using Internet Explorer, you may be required to add "Michigan.gov" to your compatibility view settings in order for the application to be successful.